RED RAIN

"The lepidopterous insects in general, soon after they emerge from the pupa state, and commonly during their first flight, discharge some drops of a red-colored fluid, more or less intense in different species, which, in some instances, where their numbers have been considerable, have produced the appearance of a 'shower of blood/ as this natural phenomenon is sometimes called.

"Showers of blood have been recorded by historians and poets as preternatural—have been considered in the light of prodigies, and regarded, where they have happened, as fearful prognostics of impending evil.

"There are two passages in Homer, which, however poetical, are applicable to a rain of this kind; and among the prodigies which took place after the death of the great dictator, Ovid particularly mentions a shower of blood:

> " 'Saepe faces visae mediis ardere sub astris,
> Saepe inter nimbos guttae cecidere cruentae.[1]
>
> " ('With threatening signs the lowering skies were fill'd,
> And sanguine drops from murky clouds distilled.')

"Among the numerous prodigies reported by Livy to have happened in the year 214 B. c.,. it is instanced that at Mantua a stagnating piece of water, caused by the overflowing of the river Mincius, appeared as of blood; and in the cattle-market at Rome a shower of blood fell in the Istrian Street After mentioning several other remarkable phenomena that happened during that year, Livy concludes by saying that these prodigies were expiated, conformably to the answers of the aruspices, by victims of the greater kinds, and supplication was ordered to be performed to all the deities who had shrines at Rome, Again, it is stated by Livy that many alarming prodigies were seen at Rome in the year 181 B. c, and others reported from abroad;

among which was a shower of blood which fell in the courts of the temples of Vulcan and Concord. After mentioning that the image of Juno Sospita shed tears, and that a pestilence broke out in the country, this writer adds that these prodigies, and the mortality which